



MEETING MINUTES

LAND USE COMMISSION

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

7:00 PM

Via Virtual Meeting

Members Present: George Halik, Kiril Mirintchev, Jeanne Lindwall, Max Puchtel, Matt Rodgers, Kristine Westerberg, Jill Zordan

Members Absent: Myrna Arevalo, Violetta Cullen, John Hewko, Brian Johnson,

Staff Present: Johanna Nyden, Meagan Jones, Cade Sterling, Brian George

Presiding Member: Matt Rodgers

Call to Order

Ms. Jones opened the meeting at 7:00pm. A roll call was done and a quorum was present.

Approval of January 26, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Zordan and Lindwall suggested edits relating to attendance, wording and clarification on reasoning for the vote on a requested continuance. Commissioner Puchtel made a motion to approve the Land Use Commission meeting minutes from January 26, 2022 as amended. Seconded by Commissioner Westerberg. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed, 6-0, with 1 abstention.

New Business

A. Public Hearing: 1414 Church Street | 22ZMJV-0002

Daniel Tornheim, architect and applicant, requests the following: a Major Variation from Section 6-8-2-8(A)(4) of the Evanston Zoning Code to allow a rear yard of 3 feet where 30 feet is required; a Minor Variation from Section 6-8-2-7 of the Evanston Zoning Code to allow a building lot coverage of approximately 38.1% or 1,783 square-feet where no more than 30% or 1,404 square-feet is permitted; and a Minor Variation from Section 6-8-2-10(A) of the Evanston Zoning Code to allow an impervious surface lot coverage of approximately 49% or 2,291 square-feet where no more than 45% or 2,106 square-feet is permitted, all for the construction of an addition to the existing principal structure in the R1 Single-Family Residential District. The Land Use Commission is the determining body in accordance with Section 6-3-8-9 of the Evanston Zoning Code and Ordinance 92-O-21.

Ms. Jones read the case into the record. Chair Rodgers clarified that this item began under the Zoning Board of Appeals but has now transitioned to the Land Use Commission since the duties of Zoning Board and Plan Commission combined and are under the jurisdiction of the Land Use Commission (as of January 1, 2022)

Mr. Daniel Tornheim, architect, provided an overview of the project, site constraints and various options considered. He noted the smaller lot size and challenges with regards to setbacks, different garage locations that were considered and reasoning for the current proposal for a garage addition right off of the alley.

The hearing was then open to questions from Commissioners.

Commissioner Halik expressed that Mr. Tornheim did a good job describing the plan but needed to address the reasoning behind massing and asked if other massings had been considered. Mr. Tornheim responded that the addition referenced the existing home to be consistent. He mentioned a discussion with Preservation regarding the initial significant overhang on the garage which was asked to be reduced. The Existing garage is setback less than 1 ft. from the property line with an eave height of about 8 or 9 ft. and the proposed garage addition would increase the setback to 3 ft. with a similar eave height. He added that a flat roof on this addition would not be consistent with the home. Mr. Tornheim then explained that the roof height is where it is in order to maintain the interior ceiling height. If the garage height were lowered, the ceiling height in the home would have to be lower and is already at 8 ft. where a 7 ft. height is the minimum.

Commissioner Westerberg asked if the removed parking pad is intended to be turned into green space once the garage is built. Mr. Tornheim confirmed this is the intent and was necessary to reduce impervious surface coverage.

Commissioner Puchtel inquired about references to comments and Chair Rodgers and Ms. Jones clarified that comments were linked in the staff report and additional comments received after the packet was posted were added to the website and shared with the Commission.

The hearing was then open to public questions and testimony.

Mr. Mark McKeown stated that his home is near the alley entrance at the opposite end of the alley and has a keen interest in the alley use. He explained that he has been working to improve the alley with the City and neighbors. He continued, stating that focused on the impact of the proposal of the alley. OF the 10 homes with only the King's home (1414 Church) do not have a garage. He added that he read through the packet materials and looked at the effects of the functionality and aesthetics. He believes the aesthetics and functionality of the alley will be improved with the proposal.

Mr. Paul McDonald stated that he lives across the street from the subject property and understands the lack of parking in the area. He expressed support for the project and

that the location of the garage makes sense and aesthetically, the proposed garage looks nice. He stated he supports everyone having a garage where feasible and reiterated his support of the proposed project.

Mr. Dave and Mrs. Nan Hoff who live in the coach house immediately south of the proposed project stated their opposition. The expressed concern for safety and described the only way to enter and exit the coach house is through two wooden staircases adjacent to the proposed garage. Mr. Hoff stated that fire hazard would increase with the new addition. Mrs. Hoff stated that their views would also be significantly impacted by the new garage. She then explained that the renderings do not show the two large windows on the north side of the coach house that allow for sunlight and views while the current garage does not block the light. The new garage looms over the coach house. She expressed understanding of the King's desire to have a garage that enables them to access their vehicles without dealing with inclement weather but that there are other alternatives to do so. She then suggested that a single-car garage and parking pad would be better.

Shannon Sieberling stated that she has walked up and down the alley and expressed that zoning laws are not primarily for the individual but to preserve the beauty and value of the community. Glad for improvements to a house but if a project affects neighbors; it does not contribute to the community. The coach house is an architecturally designed and intriguing building and the proposed garage is almost a robbery of value from one property to another. She also expressed concern about permeable space that is important to include.

Ms. Joan Safford stated she has lived in the neighborhood since the 1960's and expressed her opposition to the proposed project. She explained that the proposed garage is a handsome design but does not recognize its broader impact. The proposed garage will impinge on the coach house and the view of it. She then explained that there is not a recognizable hardship and that the proposal does not meet the standards. Ms. Safford then explained the history of the neighborhood and changes that have occurred due to white flight. She mentioned that she has walked buyers around the neighborhood and that it has a variety of housing stock. She then stated that she has served on the Zoning Committee and has worked on fair housing. Ms. Safford reiterated that the standards were not met and explained this is due to there being impact to the neighborhood, a lack of parking not rendering their property nonfunctional and that lack of parking not being unique to this property. Ms. Safford added that she treasures the Kings as neighbors but that any accommodation for this proposal is not the minimum change.

Mary McWilliams stated that she helped form the request to the Preservation Commission requesting that the Commission deny the proposed changes. She explained that this area was not created considering cars and that people purchasing homes do so with the expectation that that would be the case. Ms. McWilliams then gave a short history of subdivisions and easements of other properties and provided the example of a two car garage being approved at 1330 Church but it had greater open

space. The subdivision of 1414 Church was done in 1897. She closed by encouraging the Commission to deny the changes.

Mr. Kirk Ziehm explained that he and his wife share 50% of the property border with 1414 Church and 2 other neighbors share the other borders. He explained that the Kings asked them in October about their plans but had not had their comments included in what is proposed. He then added that, since there are no postcards mailed for DAPR meetings there were no voices of opposition at that meeting. He then urged the Commission to oppose the proposal.

Mrs. Amanda Ziehm clarified that the Preservation Commission did approve the CoA but did not provide a recommendation on the zoning changes and declined to provide that to the ZBA (whose duties now fall under the Land Use Commission). Preservation did provide comments on the need for a 2-car garage. Mrs. Ziehm then stated that the proposal does not meet 5 of the 7 standards. There is adverse impact on the neighbor, the height and proximity of the addition would impact enjoyment and safety of the coach house. She then expressed concern of the \$70,000 investment made to improve the coach house and expressed that the proposed plan is inconsistent with City's efforts in developing ADUs. Mrs. Ziehm added that nonconforming conditions are common in the historic district and 1-car or no garage is common off of the alley and provided suggestions for possible alternative, stating she would support other options. She then asked that the Commission deny any variance requested.

Mr. Tornheim made a closing statement explaining that the top of the list in the garage design is safety. The City's building codes require structures to have a 1-hour fire rated wall and eave. He emphasized that he has not tried to make the garage unsafe, that there would be a 3 ft. setback instead of less than 1 ft. setback and that typical lighting and venting is provided.

The Commission then began deliberation.

Commissioner Halik expressed that this is a tight site and he has no problem with variations for a site like this but has typically reviewed projects that are much larger. This type of project is easier to make a decision on as it affects fewer residents and the Commission should listen to them. He expressed that he believes the proposed project will devalue the neighboring property and that there are other possible alternatives.

Commissioner Westerberg echoed Commissioner Halik's comments and complimented the architect on a well-designed addition. She added that despite this, it is a dramatic impact which should be taken into account.

Commissioner Puchtel echoed other Commissioner statements. He explained that if the proposed project was confined to its own property it would be ok, it is designed well and increases greenspace. However, he is troubled with the impact. He explained that the renderings do not accurately reflect the full impact. He then stated that the height does not seem to change from the existing home but that he would err on the side of caution.

Commissioner Zordan stated that if the Commission were considering just this property, the proposal appears to be an elegant and appropriate solution. However looking at the impact to the coach house she would like to see some additional information on the visual impact of the proposed addition.

Commissioner Mirintchev stated that he is on the same page with his colleagues with some nuance. He explained that this proposal would probably pass with better renderings; however, there are other solutions that could be applied here. He liked that there are similarities in the addition to the existing home but the same effects can be obtained with a different massing.

Commissioner Lindwall explained that she likes the notion of a 1-car attached garage with a parking pad; this would still need variations but could create additional building separation. She expressed appreciation for the proposed mitigation such as increasing the setback from the rear lot line and replacing the brick patio with permeable pavers.

Chair Rodgers suggested that he would be in the minority regarding his thoughts on the project. He stated that the applicant is removing the illegal parking pad. He stated that he was at the property and that at footers for the coach house stairway, the gap between that and the garage is very small and he is in favor of moving the garage further away and with better construction with a fire rated wall which is likely more than what is existing. He then explained that he does not buy into issues with views from the property as the property faces north and would still get sunlight. He then added that the subdivision put the coach house right at the property line at no fault to any of the current residents. He then pointed out that a parking pad creates additional stormwater run-off and a garage would have a gutter to better direct the stormwater.

The Commission then reviewed Standards for Approval of Major Variations, led by Commissioner Puchtel. Standards 1 and 4 were met with disagreement on whether or not the standard had been met.

1. Commissioner Puchtel expressed that that impact is not fully known but there likely will be. Chair Rodgers countered that all zoning changes have impact but it needs to be considered if the impact will be substantial. With regards to views from the coach house, three remaining sides will have sunlight and unobstructed views (without confirming the proposal does obstruct views). Commission Lindwall agreed, stating there is more of the coach house that extends east on that property. She does not know that as much of the light is blocked as was suggested.

2. Standard met.

3. Standard met.

4. Commissioner Westerberg stated that she felt this standard was not met since other homes in the area do not have 2-car garages and there are other alternatives.

Commissioner Puchtel agreed. Chair Rodgers expressed that the garage would be superior to a parking pad because, while you are keeping the same amount of

impervious surface, you are better able to direct stormwater run-off. Commissioner Halik stated that this is not just about the 2-D surface but the 3-D structure of the garage.

5. Standard met.
6. Standard met.
7. Standard met.

Chair Rodgers then clarified that due to the Commission currently having 11 members and being the determining body in this case, 6 concurrent votes are needed to approve the requested variation.

Commissioner Lindwall made a motion to approve the Major Variation request. Seconded by Chair Rodgers. A roll call vote was taken and, due to the absence of Commissioners, the matter was continued to the February 23, 2022 meeting with the vote of 2-5 on a motion to approve this item recorded standing in order to allow additional Commissioners to view the minutes and/or audio-visual recording of the proceedings, and then vote on the motion at the February 23 hearing as per the Land Use Commission rules.

B. Public Hearing: 1000 Grove Street | 21ZMJV-0097

Richard Lehner, LCM Architects, applicant on behalf of the McGaw YMCA, requests two zoning variations from the Evanston Zoning Ordinance to allow for the addition of an approximately 431 square-foot entry vestibule to the existing recreation and community center with men's residences, commonly known as the McGaw YMCA, in the R6 General Residential District. The applicant requests one Major Variation to allow a street side yard setback from Maple Avenue of zero (0) feet where a minimum of 15 feet is required [Section 6-8-8-7(B)(2)]. The applicant also requests a Minor Variation to allow the building lot coverage of approximately 43,331 square-feet or 60.22% percent where the maximum permitted is 35,977 square-feet or 50% of the lot area (Section 6-8-8-6). The subject property is currently improved with one 5-story building and a surface parking lot. The Land Use Commission is the determining body for this request.

Ms. Jones read the case into the record.

Ms. Monique Parsons, President and CEO of McGaw YMCA, provided an introduction of the architect, Richard Lehner, Nicole Woodard (McGaw's Chief Operating Officer) and Jodie Wickersheimer (McGaw's Chief Development Officer) then provided a brief history and background of the YMCA.

Mr. Richard Lehner, LCM Architects, provided information on the renovations being done on the interior of the building and detailed the proposed entry addition to the Maple Avenue facade of the building. He explained that the work is being done to improve the quality of life and dignity of the men living in the residences.

The hearing was then opened to questions from Commissioners.

Chair Rodgers asked for clarification on building entries and asking if the intent is to keep traffic separate. Mr. Lehner explained that the intent is to create separate entrances for the residences and the YMCA members. Currently the men go in through the main entry, as the elevator is accessible from the main entrance, and have mail boxes that are in a corner used by other people using the YMCA. Egress has been seriously considered and there are two means of egress which meets egress requirements.

Chair Rodgers confirmed that the passenger elevator is in the main lobby and accessed from the main entrance. Mr. Lehner confirmed this and that there are two main groups that use the elevators, those living the men's residences and those accessing the McGaw administrative offices though he believes about 95% of those individuals use the stairs. Ms. Parsons confirmed staff use of the stairs since it is just one flight up to reach the offices.

Commissioner Halik asked if a flatter massing had been considered with less projection from the east facade. Mr. Lehner responded that this was considered but that it was found to obscure more windows and it may hinder other exits on that side of the building. Some of those windows are in a public area used by middle school youth that the YMCA wanted to keep open. Commissioner Halik mentioned that a narrower design could be considered if anyone has issues with the current design.

Commissioner Mirintchev inquired about the windows behind the new entry. Mr. Lehner clarified that the windows above the mullion will remain visible while 2 two windows below that are intended to be opaque. He added that he could investigate leaving them open but is not sure if that would be desirable and the space may also need to be used for utilities and stormwater run-off.

Chair Rodgers mentioned that the roof appears to slope towards the building. Mr. Lehner confirmed this to be the case and that there is a separation of the new entry's roof from the building to accommodate stormwater run-off.

Commissioner Westerberg asked where the applicant was retrieving impervious surface. Mr. Lehner pointed out where additional paving was being taken out and clarified that the proposed addition is on top of existing impervious surface. Due to existing site conditions, there were no vast areas of additional impervious surface that could be removed.

Commissioner Zordan inquired about existing trees and landscaping on the site and if that would remain or be replaced. Mr. Lehner clarified that the rendering that is in the packet does not show the exact location of trees. There is a tree on the corner of the property that is unaffected by the addition and the addition will be under the canopy of a nearby tree. One small tree will be removed but replaced per DAPR request.

Commissioner Puchtel inquired if the proposed addition would remove basement access. Mr. Lehner responded that the existing egress stair from the basement was

grandfathered in and is being replaced by the addition, which enters into the basement level.

The hearing was then open to public questions and testimony.

Ms. Hanchar asked if the Grove Street entrance will return to being the main entrance for members and what prevents that return to using the Grove entry. Ms. Parsons responded that the Grove Street will eventually be the main entrance but may not be the only entrance and she could not clarify exactly when due to the ongoing pandemic. She then clarified that the proposed entry is not being proposed because of the pandemic but in order to separate the resident entry from the recreational entry. This helps control flow into the building.

Ms. Parsons then thanked Tom Moran for providing the seed funding for the detailed planning and variance phase of the project and staff and Commissioners for their time. Approving the variances makes it possible for McGaw to continue fundraising momentum for the project construction.

The Commission then began deliberations.

Chair Rodgers stated that the proposed addition makes sense and creates minimal impact. He then expressed that he likes that the design does not attempt to mimic the existing structure but gives the addition its own space. Appreciates allowing the residence to have its own entrance as is seen in so many buildings that share uses.

The Commission then reviewed the 7 standards for approval of Variations and found that all 7 standards had been met

Commissioner Halik made a motion to approve the proposed variations. Seconded by Commissioner Zordan. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was approved unanimously.

Communication

Ms. Jones provided a brief overview of the next meeting's agenda.

Commissioner Halik inquired about an update to the Strategic & Comprehensive Plan RFP. Ms. Nyden responded that the RFP has been posted and Commissioner Lindwall confirmed that she began reaching out to Comprehensive Plan Sub-Committee members.

Adjournment

Commissioner Lindwall motioned to adjourn, Commissioner Westerberg seconded, and the motion carried.

Adjourned 9:12pm

Respectfully submitted,

Meagan Jones, Neighborhood & Land Use Planner